



June 2, 2014

## **KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-14-42**

### **SUBJECT: LTP–Veteran Farmer and Rancher–Fiscal Year 2014**

**Purpose:** To provide guidance for implementing veteran farmer or rancher provisions provided for in the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill)

**Expiration Date:** September 30, 2015

**Background.** The 2014 Farm Bill added provisions for veteran farmers or ranchers. This bulletin clarifies the definition and provides guidance on preferences given to veteran farmers or ranchers for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

**Explanation.** The term veteran farmer or rancher (VFR) means a person who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable and who also meets the definition of beginning farmer or rancher (BFR). The VFR must: (a) not have operated a farm or ranch or (b) not have operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 consecutive years. For a legal entity or joint operation to be considered a VFR entity, all members must meet the definition of VFR.

There will be no separate veteran subaccounts. In addition, veteran's preference, as identified in this bulletin, does not apply to the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).

The 2014 Farm Bill states a VFR will be given a preference in the BFR and socially disadvantaged (SDA) ranking category/fund codes for both EQIP and CSP. To receive veteran's preference in the SDA ranking category/fund code, the applicant must be SDA, BFR, and a veteran. For veteran's preference in the BFR ranking category/fund code, the applicant must be a BFR and a veteran.

For CSP and EQIP applications received prior to VFR guidance, all participants that fall within BFR and SDA must be contacted to determine if they would like to self-certify as a VFR. Document in the case file or on the application the date of contact and any pertinent details.

Applications accepted before February 7, 2014, that did not self-certify as BFR or SDA do not need to be contacted, as veteran's preference only applies to those underserved categories.

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For applications received after February 7, 2014, the participant may simply check the BFR and Veteran's box if they wish to self-certify as a VFR. If they are also SDA, that box must also be checked to be considered for preference in the SDA ranking category/fund code. For pending applications received before February 7, 2014, where the participant self-certified as BFR, attach a new application to the existing application and have the participant complete only the VFR, BFR, and potential SDA check boxes on the new application form and sign at the bottom of the new application.

### **Veteran's Preference in EQIP**

For EQIP in fiscal year (FY) 2014, all VFR applications within the BFR and SDA ranking category/fund codes will be given a "High" priority. For EQIP, VFR participants determined to meet the above criteria will be eligible to receive the historically underserved payment rate. In the case of a contract made with multiple participants, the historically underserved payment rates are applied as described in the note under Title 440, Conservation Programs Manual (CPM), Part 512, Section 512.5. In addition, VFR participants are entitled to up to 50 percent of the payment rates as advanced payments subject to policy in Title 440, CPM, Part 512, Section 512.67 C.

**NOTE:** The field office is responsible for assigning a "High" priority to VFR applications in Program Contracts System that meet the preferences listed for BFR and SDA ranking categories.

### **Veteran's Preference in CSP**

For CSP in FY2014, all VFR applications within the BFR and SDA ranking category/fund codes will be assigned a "High" priority. The funding sequence will be "High" priority applications in descending order of ranking, then all other applications in descending order of ranking within each subaccount. Note: the priority categorization of High, Medium, Low, or None has been enabled in Program Contracts System for CSP applications. This prioritization only applies to applications containing a VFR self-certification. Priorities of Medium or Low should not be used.

**Contact:** Please forward questions through established channels to Xiomara Tryban, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, at (785) 823-4569 or email [xiomara.tryban@ks.usda.gov](mailto:xiomara.tryban@ks.usda.gov).

*(Signed)*

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State Conservationist